

# HOSPICE HAPPENINGS



Summer 2015

Compassionate care for the terminally ill, their caregivers and their family



## Debby Smith, RN

In Conversation with George Beier

Debby spent her childhood and early youth in South Dakota. When she was in her 30s, during a trip to visit her sister in Detroit, she met Gordon Smith (she says she knew her fate at first sight). They started dating and a year later began their 30 year marriage. They lived and worked in Toronto and in the San Francisco Bay area. Five years ago, they retired and moved to Sequim, attracted by the area's natural beauty and friendly small town attitudes.

Gordon's health declined over several years, and a year ago he died. In retrospect, Debby acknowledges the many challenges and struggles that were on-going aspects in caring for Gordon; however, with hindsight and perspective, she states it was a sacred privilege.

Debby has been a volunteer with VHOCC for the last three years. Her main tasks are assisting people who have lost loved ones and facilitating the grief recovery program in Sequim. She is also a frequent public speaker, getting the hospice message out to various groups from Rotary to High Schools. As an RN, she has volunteered for over twenty years with various hospice organizations in the U.S. and Canada, and was briefly on staff as a case manager with a hospice outside Toronto.

She and Gordon moved to California, where Debby was diagnosed with a late-stage cancer, which included five years of chemotherapy. During her treatment, she began working with other survivors. For a decade she was involved with The Cancer Support Community helping other patients coping with the emotional and physical aspects of their disease. Thus, her work made her exceptionally fit to relate to hospice clients.

Qualifications are one thing. Motivation for grief recovery work is another. And in Debby's case, intense motivation shines through. Debby speaks with the authority that comes from personal loss about the intense grief and dislocation that is felt when a partner dies. "It's not just the loss of a partner," she says. "It's a shift in self-identification - there begins a rebuilding of your life. Memories and rituals take on new importance and meaning." Often a grieving partner is seeking "closure," as if a decades-long union could be closed off and wrapped up, and life could quickly return to normal. Debby sees her role as helping survivors get past the cruel mirage of closure, and instead come to see death and survival as part of the continuing tapestry of life, with survivors' natural and necessary grief as part of the process.

Debby speaks to local groups and organization about hospice because she has deeply held beliefs that she needs to share. As a nurse, she worked with prenatal (cont. p. 2)

**Volunteer Hospice of Clallam County**

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Email [office@vhocc.org](mailto:office@vhocc.org)

## Calendar of Events

### BOARD MEETING

(open to visitors)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Tues - 10:00 AM

### MONTHLY IN-SERVICE

3<sup>rd</sup> Monday - 11:00 AM

Alternates monthly in Sequim at Trinity United Methodist Church and Port Angeles Hospice House (Dark in June, July & Aug.)

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### Grief Support Series

Port Angeles Hospice House (Behind 8<sup>th</sup> Street office) - 6-wk. series.

\*Mon. 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Sequim Trinity United Methodist Church -5-wk. series.

\*Mon. 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Call office for dates

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### Grief Support Groups

For those who have completed the Grief Support Series

### Port Angeles Support Group

Twice monthly

Hospice House

Wednesdays - 6:30 PM

### Sequim Support Group

Trinity United Methodist Church

3<sup>rd</sup> Monday - 1:00 PM

### One-on-One

### Bereavement Support

Call office for details

care and labor and delivery. As a companion to grieving survivors, she works with death and its aftermath, both being critical chapters in everyone's life. Combining these with the personal experience of a lifetime, she can offer special insights on end of life processes and hospice's unique role.

*Recommended reading - Debby recommends the works of Dr. Alan Wolfelt. See <http://www.centerforloss.com/>  
Recommended listening - Seize the chance to listen to one of Debby's public talks.*



## HOSPICE HUGS . . .

**To Chestnut Cottage Restaurant in Port Angeles, The Oak Table Café in Sequim, and Bushwhacker's Restaurant in Port Angeles** for donating gift certificates to our Volunteer of the Month program.

**To our Volunteers of the Month:** Jan. (Jan Canale), Feb. (Connie West), Mar. (Charles "Chuck" Sheaffer), April (all volunteers honored), and May (George Beier).

**To VHOCC Volunteers** Dave & Lyn Gilbert, Myron Nelsen, Van Maxwell, George Beier, Charles "Chuck" Sheaffer, Board President, Dr. Ed Hopfner, and Patient Care Manager, Bette Wood, who prepped and painted the trim on the hospice office on May 2.

**To VHOCC Hospice House Remodel Volunteers** (ongoing), Dave Gilbert, Ted Carpenter, Michael Bucierka, Myron Nelsen, Van Maxwell, Dr. Ed Hopfner (and Ed's son, Bob Hopfner).

**To Tracy's Insulation** in Carlsborg for their generous help and support in the remodel of Hospice House.

**To the Rotary Club of Sequim Sunshine** for their generous support.

**To the Louella Gebhardt Memorial Golf Classic** for their ongoing generous support.

**To the Esprit Gala** for their ongoing generous support.

**To the Port Angeles Senior Center & the Pickleball Primavera 24-Hour Marathon** for their generous support.

**To the Lady-Niners at Cedars Dungeness Golf Course** for their generous support.

## ~ COMING EVENTS ~

**Survivor's 4-Week Workshop**, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Port Angeles, July 9, 16, 23 & 30, 1 PM - 3 PM.

**Olympic Cellars Winery Summer Concert** (in support of VHOCC), August 15, 6 PM - 10 PM.

**VHOCC Fair booth at the Clallam County Fair**, Aug. 20 - 23, Merchants' Building.

**Air Affaire (supporting VHOCC)**, Saturday, Aug. 29, Sequim Valley Airport, 9 AM - 4 PM.

**Community & Volunteer Education Series (CVES)**, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Port Angeles, Sept. 3, 10, 17, 24 & Oct. 1 & 8, 6 PM - 8 PM.

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

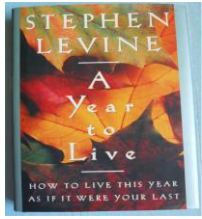
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<b>At large</b>	<b>Lyn Gilbert</b>
<b>At large</b>	<b>Bette Wood, RN</b>
<b>At large</b>	<b>Marilyn Nelsen, PhD</b>
<b>At large</b>	<b>Astrid Raffinpeyloz, MA</b>

### STAFF

<b>Office Service Manager</b>	<b>Lyn Gilbert</b>
<b>Patient Care Manager</b>	<b>Bette Wood, RN</b>
<b>Vol. Services Manager</b>	<b>Marilyn Nelsen, PhD</b>

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## Book Review



### *A Year to Live: How to Live This Year as If It Were Your Last, by Stephen Levine*

Stephen Levine, best known for his 1982 groundbreaking book “Who dies: An Investigation of Conscious Living and Conscious Dying” wrote “A Year to Live” after years sitting at bedsides and listening to people’s comments on how unprepared for dying they felt as they approached death.

Using himself as an experiment, he investigated throughout 365 days starting New Year’s Day in 1994 what it was like to get closer to one’s death, one day at a time. First published in 1997, this book has a lot to offer to anyone wanting to get a better grasp of the inevitable process that awaits us all.

For those not inclined to lofty spiritual matters, a viewing of the movie “The Bucket List” might suffice in reminding us that our lives are temporary and doing what we want to do before we die is important for a sense of completion. Yet we can only feel gratitude towards Stephen Levine for taking on the more serious challenge inherent in the dying process. By living one full year as if it was his last, he leads us into a deep search for mindfulness. Levine reveals what ultimately matters most, to focus on our heart and to open into love, so that we might accept and even be grateful for our death. He takes us through guided meditations, some steeped in Buddhist practices, some insightful exercises (let someone else feed you, follow another person’s lead while blindfolded) and some practical advice (put your affairs in order, sing and dance at your heart’s desire). Do not expect anything more detailed in the practical arena. Stephen Levine is a poet of the soul, a longtime meditation teacher and a Buddhist practitioner infused with Hinduism. Throughout the book, he gently exhorts us to practice forgiveness, which will help in addressing unfinished business, whatever that might be. What you will find in his prose is how to access mindfulness, so that, when the time comes, you can enter into the dance of dying with full awareness.

While not necessarily the best book for someone very close to death or in the throes of a long and painful terminal illness, it is nonetheless an excellent guide for living fully and practicing awareness and acceptance of what is to come when we will reach that threshold.

*Reviewed by Astrid Raffinpeyloz, VHOCC Volunteer & Board member*

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### **CHECK OUT VHOCC’S NEW, IMPROVED WEBSITE!**

Here are some of the enthusiastic comments we’ve received since the launch of our new website on June 2.

**“Looks clean and easy to navigate.”**

**Linda Cameron**

**“I just checked out the new website and it looks great! Job well done!”**

**Pat Morgan**

**“This is great! Really easy to access all of the info, very informative . . . thanks for putting that together, all of you.”**

**Lauren Davenport**

**“Great job! It looks good and clean and is very easy to navigate. Congratulations!”**

**Cherie Cospsey**

**Our thanks to volunteers Leah Erb, Astrid Raffinpeyloz, Ken Brown, Jan Canale, and a host of others who worked tirelessly to make the launch of our new website a huge success! Come visit us and experience the difference at [www.vhocc.org](http://www.vhocc.org)**



## SEQUIM PRAIRIE GRANGE SPONSORS VHOCC WITH AN ICE CREAM SOCIAL!



JULY 12, 2015



***“I SCREAM, YOU SCREAM, WE ALL SCREAM FOR ICE CREAM!”***

***COMMUNITY TURNOUT MADE THIS EVENT A HUGE SUCCESS!***



VHOCC volunteers assisting: Astrid Raffinpeyloz, Lyn Gilbert, Ann Thomas, Jane Anderson, Maggie Bourne-Raiswell, Marilyn & Myron Nelsen